

Locked by EmeraldTulip

Series: [deadbolt \[1\]](#)

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Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Erica Sinclair, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers & Eleven | Jane & Dustin Henderson & Maxine Mayfield & Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Will's life is getting better. He's graduating, he has plans for the future, and his best friend-slash-longtime crush seems to be taking an interest in him—so, of course, that's when the Upside Down manifests as something new.

Locked

Author's Note:

I'm honestly not entirely sure what this is but I had myself shook at 1:00am last night over it so I guess it's worth it.

It's set at the end of the Party's senior year, and carries a little into the summer. I hope y'all enjoy!

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. You're okay. Open your eyes, now. Just breathe.

Mike's words, his reassurances now so familiar through their repetition during Will's panic attacks, echo in Will's head as his feet drag to a stop. He collapses to his knees, leaves and dirt sticking to his clothes, gasping for breath, and wrenches his eyes open.

"Where are you?" he asks, voice echoing unnaturally as he frantically looks around the dim forest. "I know something's out there!" There's no answer, and he suddenly feels frozen. "W-what are you?"

A twig cracks behind him, but when he glances back, there's nothing.

"You seem quiet today," Lucas observes as they all pick at their lunches.

Will glances up at him and shrugs. "I had a weird dream last night. Just... tired, I guess."

Obvious lie. Think of a better one next time.

"Not too tired we can't play D&D tonight, right?" Max asks, and Mike scoffs good naturedly, leaning against Will.

"Like *you're* excited for D&D," he shakes his head. "You just want an excuse to come over to my house and skate around outside with El."

"Skating makes more sense than your game," El argues softly, and

Dustin groans.

“You’ve done it now,” he sighs, looking pointedly at Mike’s frustrated face.

As he launches into another point about the virtues of Dungeons and Dragons, Will stares at him—just wants to take the image in, how passionate Mike is about the things he loves. Will admires that.

Another lie. You know what you really want.

Will quashes the voice in his head.

“I’m so proud of you, sweetheart,” his mother whispers into his hair, and he knows she’s trying not to cry.

What for?

“Mom,” he squirms, even though he loves her. “Mom, I just graduated, it’s not a big deal. Everyone did it.”

You’re not special for going to school. Do remember that. Other things make you strong.

His mom shakes her head. “No. You, Will, are remarkable. And I am so, so proud of you.”

She’s your mom, she has to say that. And she has no idea what the truth is.

“Hey, Byers.” The words are spat out with malice, falling flat in the quiet air, and it takes Will no time at all to recognize the voice.

Keep it simple. Don’t run.

“Troy,” he greets, trudging on without looking back, because this has-been bully hasn’t left him alone even all these years later, even when Will is just walking through town on a quiet afternoon. “Something you need?”

Stay cool. Stay calm.

“Yeah,” Troy confirms. “I thought a parting gift would be necessary, after graduation. You know, for old time’s sake.”

Stop walking. Find your center of gravity. Get ready.

Will nods once, jaw clenching. “You probably want to try to throw me off a cliff or something, like you did with Mike.”

You’re angry. Good. Use that. But don’t show it. Yet.

“I didn’t throw him,” Troy points out. “Just told him to jump. Besides,” he says, and there’s the unmistakable sound of a weapon being drawn. “You’re gonna end up in a worse way than he would have.”

Now is a good time to let it loose.

Will lets that advice take over, closes his eyes and lets unfamiliar instincts set in, and the metallic *shnik shnik* of the knife fades into background noise.

“I want to know what you are,” Will demands of the darkness. He turns in a slow circle, surveying the familiar gray landscape. “Is it you that’s been talking to me? Telling me how to do things? Or am I losing it?”

This time, he sees nothing. But he hears a voice, cryptic as ever:

“That, and so much more.”

“Will,” Mike says softly, and Will is filled with the sudden need to bolt. He doesn’t. Mike swallows. “If... if I do something you don’t want me to do, punch me, okay?”

Will’s throat clicks, and it’s hard to get out the words. He’s amazed that the voice in his head hasn’t shown up to discourage him yet. “I really don’t think I’m going to punch you.” Although he could be wrong.

He can see all the shades of brown in Mike's eyes.

Mike sucks in a breath. "Okay," he breathes. "That's... that's good. I'm going to kiss you now." All of a sudden, he takes up Will's whole world.

And Will's mind is astonishingly silent.

Maybe he's tired of running. Maybe these new feelings, this new thing he has with Mike... maybe all that has made him brave—or stupid. Maybe that's why, when he finds himself in the forest again, the Upside Down, he doesn't move. Instead, he asks.

"What do you want from me?" he yells, because he's been back here again and again and there's no reason he can see for it. "What are you doing?"

There's a flash of color behind him, something vaguely person-shaped, but when Will spins around it's already gone.

I'm a part of you. I'm what's keeping you afloat. I want to help you. Don't you trust me?

"Not when you keep telling me things I don't want to hear!" he mutters. "Not when you decide to do things and won't let me remember them! I don't *like* you making me do things!"

A knock on the door startles him out of his thoughts, and he realizes how crazy he must look if there was anyone watching. "And now I feel weird. Thanks."

He marches over to the door and wrenches it open, coming face-to-face with Erica. "Oh. Um, hi."

"My brother said to give you these," she says shortly, dumping a pile of books and papers into his hands. She stalks off to her bike, dropped messily out front, and hops on, pedaling up to the road.

Pest.

His hand twitches without him meaning to do it, and Erica's bike careens into a ditch. He hears her scream as she falls and immediately tries to run to her, but his feet carry him back inside and his hand shuts the door behind him. A chill takes root in his chest. "What was *that*?"

Relax. She's inconsequential.

Trust me.

"Guys," he manages to choke out one night.

Don't say anything. If you say a word, I—

"I can't make it leave."

El jerks back, their foreheads disconnecting, and she almost topples to the floor.

"Sorry," Will says.

Don't apologize. It's her fault for being invasive.

"It's so dark," she marvels. "And it's everywhere. It almost feels... alive. Like a whole new person. Or, at least, like it wants to be."

"No wonder you want it out," Max says, cautiously eyeing Will.

"But you can fix it, right?" Lucas asks.

Dustin nods vigorously. "Yeah, you can get it out of him."

Will waits for someone to say something. Silence hangs for a moment.

She glances up at each of them, at Mike. Her eyes are dark and solemn. "I can try."

"Wait," Mike says, and then he takes Will's hand, squeezing it. "I'll call the doctors at the lab if... if anything goes wrong. I'm sure Dr.

Owens would take the call. But only if things go wrong.” His palm is sweaty and his whole body is shaking. Will can feel it.

How will he know what’s wrong? He’s... just a human. We’re better than that.

Human. That’s what Will *wants*. He wants fragility and normalcy and boring days, he wants a simple and idyllic future, he wants passionate and wonderful Mike. He doesn’t want the Upside Down—he wants his life.

Don’t we all.

He looks up into his boyfriend’s eyes, trying to communicate those three words he can’t bring himself to say yet. Then he blinks and looks back down at El. “I want it out of my head. Please.”

She nods once. “Ready.”

Yes, I am.

El takes Will’s face in her hands and pushes their foreheads back together. It’s a weird feeling—like her hands are pulsing on his face. It’s warm and not entirely unpleasant for all of about three seconds before a bolt of white-hot pain slices down his head.

“Ow!” he yelps, trying to pull back, but El won’t—or can’t—let go. He’s frozen.

Thsss onerrrrr, not-t-t-tmm eee.

The voice sputters and dies, slurring together until it fades away completely. That would be relieving if it didn’t hurt so much. His vision cuts out first, then his hearing, and the rest of his senses shut off until all he can feel is excruciating pain.

Then he passes out.

Will runs, runs, runs, because it’s after him, it’s finally *here*, finally

catching up to him after months—no, *years*—of him not even knowing he was running away from it.

“What are you?” he shouts, because if it’s in this forest, real or not real, it’s not safe. He stumbles and falls, hitting the ground hard. He’s winded for a moment, lying there. “Maybe El did it,” he finally says out loud. “Maybe it’s gone.”

Then there’s a familiar voice.

“*Will Byers*,” it says from behind him, and he scrambles to his feet.

He whips around and he sees—

“What *are* you?” he asks again, because that seems to be the only appropriate question at the moment, the only question he can form.

It smiles—the monster smiles. “*Will Byers*,” it says again, and Will sees his own face grinning back at him.

Will pushes open the doors and is met with the sight of Mike waiting for him in the lobby, slouching in a chair, foot tapping impatiently.

“Hey!” he greets cheerfully, and something gleeful in him stirs as Mike jumps to his feet.

“Will!” he smiles broadly, and it’s infectious. “How’d the checkup go? You all good?”

No, no.

“You’re looking at a newly confirmed Upside-Down-free boyfriend,” Will confirms, slotting himself under Mike’s arm. “We ready to go?”

No, stop, please.

“Sure are,” Mike nods, picking up his bag from the floor and slinging

it over his shoulder. "I was thinking, movie night tonight? Just the two of us, to celebrate?"

"Sounds great."

Stop, please! I promise, I promise I'll listen this time!

Mike holds the door of the lab open for Will and he gratefully shoots him a smile as he walks out of that horrible place. He's about to head for Mike's familiar car when Mike stops him, hand on his arm, and kisses him. He's quick but firm, and Will reels from it.

"That's... new," he mutters, even if it isn't technically true. Mike doesn't hear him, anyway.

Let me out!

"Sorry," Mike grins sheepishly. "I didn't want to do that inside, but... you're my boyfriend, and this whole mess is *over*, and I'm just..." He shakes his head, small smile lingering on his lips, and walks over to his car, spring in his step.

Don't touch him! Let me out! I swear to you, I'll do what you want, anything you want, just let me out!

The words ring out in Will's head with such force that he flinches slightly.

"Shut up," he mutters, hand flying up to his head.

"Will!" Mike calls, leaning out of the car. "You okay?"

Please! Let me out!

He grins behind his hand, dropping his voice to a whisper. "I want to be alive. I want *your* life."

"Will?"

He shakes his head to distort the replying shout in his head. "Yeah, Mike. Just a headache."

Mike frowns slightly, concerned and paranoid as ever. “There’s nothing else wrong?”

Give me my body back, now!

“Nope,” he replies. “Absolutely not.”

As he steps into Mike’s car, the monster smiles.

Author’s Note:

Don’t imagine Will locked in his own mind for all eternity as the Upside Down entity lives as him forever, with Mike, with his friends, with his family, and no one notices because the entity has *become* him. Don’t imagine how the entity takes away Will’s agency and humanity and replaces it with its own inhuman life. Don’t imagine that.

I mean... sorry.

If you’re curious, the part where the voice gets all choppy while El is trying to exorcise it is the Upside Down saying “this is on her, not me.” It’s blaming the subsequent takeover on El, because of course it won’t accept the blame itself.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this, in any sense of the word. Comments and kudos are, as always, appreciated.

Find me on tumblr, my main is [@fivehargreeves](#) and my writing blog is [@lowriting](#)!